

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

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EUR-12 /086 W

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R 061059Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9007

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ELAB, SY, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: SARG USE OF LABOR ORGANIZATION TO DEFEND

SYRIAN POLICY TOWARD LEBANON PRODUCES MIXED RESULTS

REF: DAMASCUS 4189

1. EMBASSY HAS COLLATED FROM SYRIAN LABOR PUBLICATION, "SOCIALISM", SARG ATTEMPTS TO UTILIZE ITS LABOR ORGANIZATION TO PROMOTE SYRIAN VIEW OF LEBANESE CRISIS TO SYRIAN AND FOREIGN AUDIENCE. WITHIN SYRIA, UNION REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH WORKERS IN DERA, DEIR AL-ZOR AND HOMS -- AND PRESUMABLY OTHER CITIES AS WELL -- TO "CLARIFY OUR NATION'S PRINCIPLED STAND VIS-A-VIS LEBANESE EVENTS".

2. SYRIAN LABOR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE FOREIGN AUDIENCES CENTERED AROUND ICATU MEETINGS IN CAIRO, CONTACTS WITH EUROPEAN LABOR UNIONS, AND BRIEFING OF INTERNATIONAL
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TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION DELEGATES IN HAVANA. SYRIAN GCLU

PRESIDENT MAHMUD HADID RETURNED TO CAIRO FOR SPECIAL ICATU LEADERS MEETING JULY 20-21 TO DISCUSS LEBANESE CRISIS AFTER ICATU COMMITTEE VISITED SYRIA AND LEBANON ON FACT-FINDING TOUR. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN, HE OUTLINED HIS STATEMENT TO ARAB LABOR CHIEFS PRESENT BUT CONFESSED THAT DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS, PALESTINIAN LABOR UNION "COLLABORATED WITH IRAQ" AND PROPOSED DRAFT RESOLUTION WHICH WON APPROVAL FROM MOST DELEGATES. WITHOUT GOING IN DETAILS ON RESOLUTIONS, HADID CLAIMED "THEY DO NOT SERVE CAUSE OF PEACE IN LEBANON, NOR DO THEY SERVE OBJECTIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SYRIA AND PALESTINIANS. ON CONTRARY, THEY WILL COMPLICATE MATTERS MORE. RAISING THREAT OF END TO SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN UNION, HADID OBSERVED THAT "CAIRO RESOLUTIONS DO NOT SERVE RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIAN GCLU AND PALESTINIAN LABOR UNION WHICH IS PRESENT ON SYRIAN TERRITORY AND TO WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN FULL SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE ON ALL LEVELS". HADID PLEDGED STRONG EFFORTS TO REVERSE RESOLUTIONS AT FUTURE ICATU MEETINGS; HIS VISIT TO ADEN AND KUWAIT BEFORE RETURNING TO DAMASCUS MAY HAVE CONSTITUTED INITIAL ATTEMPT TO BOLSTER SYRIAN SUPPORT AMONG ARAB LABOR DELEGATIONS.

3. SECOND SYRIAN DELEGATION HEADED FOR EUROPE IN MID-JULY AND RETURNED TO DAMASCUS SHORTLY AFTER CONCLUSION OF CAIRO ICATU MEETING. GCLU SEC GEN IZZ AL-DIN NASSER, BAATH PARTY REGIONAL COMMAND ALTERNATE MEMBER, HEADED TEAM THAT MET WITH COUNTERPARTS IN ITALY, FRANCE AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THEY STRESSED TO EUROPEAN LABOR LEADERS SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR FLO IN LEBANON AND SARG DESIRE TO END CONFLICT STIMULATED BY IMPERIALIST-ZIONIST CONSPIRACY. NASSER DESCRIBED TOUR AS EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF ACCEPTANCE OF SYRIAN VIEWS BY THEIR HOSTS.

4. HEAD OF SYRIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT WORKERS NASSER MIHREZ ATTENDED CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION AT HAVANA DURING JUNE AND ADDRESSED DELEGATES ON SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON, WHICH HE SAID AIMED AT HALTING FIGHTING, RESTORING ORDER AND PRESERVING LEBANESE UNITY. HE ASSERTED AFTER RETURNING TO DAMASCUS THAT CONFEREES HAD SHOWN FULL UNDERSTANDING FOR SYRIAN POSITION.

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5. COMMENT: HADID'S ADMISSION OF FAILURE IN CAIRO AND CONCOMITANT SUCCESS OF PALESTINIAN RESOLUTIONS PROBABLY SERVED AS ADDITIONAL WARNING SIGNALS TO ASAD -- AS FIRST ROUND OF TALKS BETWEEN QADDUMI AND KHADDAM BEGAN IN DAMASCUS -- OF LIMITED SYRIAN SUPPORT IN ARAB WORLD FOR SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON AND OF PALESTINIAN ABILITY TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE. WE DOUBTFUL IZZ AL-DIN

NASSER'S DISCUSSIONS IN EUROPE PROVED AS FRUITFUL AS HE
ASSERTED IN VIEW OF GENERAL EUROPEAN DISQUIET WITH SYRIAN
INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND SOVIET SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS
WHICH RECEIVED WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY. INTERNALLY, EFFORTS
BY SYRIAN LABOR LEADERSHIP TO DRUM UP UNDERSTANDING FOR SARG
POSITION APPARENTLY UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO INDICATION OF
LABOR'S RANK AND FILE HOSTILITY TO
SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION; THERE IS NO EVIDENCE
DOMESTIC LABOR AUDIENCES FOUND OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS
PERSUASIVE BUT AT THE SAME TIME, GIVEN THE BAATH'S
FIRM CONTROL OVER LABOR ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA, IT IS
UNLIKELY THEY WILL BE THE SOURCE OF ANY OVERT OPPOSITION
TO THE REGIME.
MURPHY

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